



Citizens Advisory Board
Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory

**Accessibility of Contractor Resources
to Support Citizen Advisory Board Deliberations**

Since its formation six years ago, the Idaho National Engineering and Environmental Laboratory (INEEL) Citizens Advisory Board (CAB) has evaluated numerous issues, activities, and actions proposed by the Department of Energy's Idaho Operations Office (DOE-ID) and provided consensus recommendations to DOE, Region X of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the State of Idaho. In many instances, DOE has expressed its appreciation for the independent perspective provided by the CAB in these recommendations. DOE management has also continually reaffirmed its commitment that the CAB's recommendations and activities should be conducted in an open, unbiased manner and based upon all readily available resources, including the site contractor and outside sources, as appropriate and available.

Indeed, the DOE site manager has suggested that the site contractor, first Lockheed Martin Idaho Technologies Company and now Bechtel BWXT Idaho (BBWI), should be a useful resource to the CAB. Many of the past CAB meetings included presentations from outside sources, including the State of Idaho, which have been very helpful. The INEEL site contractor has also supported the CAB evaluations in the past by providing much of the technical information necessary to understand the issues at hand.

However, the contracts between DOE and its contractors limit contractor employees to working on tasks as assigned by DOE. Consequently, BBWI and other contractors like BNFL can only provide support upon request from DOE personnel. Consequently, the CAB must first contact the appropriate DOE manager concerning a given issue. One result is that the CAB does not always make contact with the most appropriate resource (the person with the most applicable knowledge and expertise) directly or even indirectly. Another ramification is that a perception can exist that DOE "controls" access to the information provided to the CAB, fueling a potential perception of DOE bias.

Thus, while the CAB has ready access to the State of Idaho and outside experts, the INEEL CAB recommends DOE-ID confirm its commitment to the Board's independence by establishing a mechanism for reasonable access between the CAB and contractor personnel consistent with the same reasonable access as experienced with DOE-ID personnel. The mechanism of this access should be established by DOE and its contractors in full compliance with all contractual requirements, without usurping the appropriate management responsibilities under DOE, (such as commitments for funding can only be made by DOE).

This recommendation seeks to continue the cooperative support experienced in the past. This recommendation also recognizes that DOE and its contractors have very important and distinct roles and responsibilities in the issues, decisions, and activities at the INEEL. Enhanced access to contractor personnel would reaffirm DOE's intent to provide through, complete, and timely information to the CAB to support deliberations. The CAB recognizes it must be mindful in its expectations for prudent access to site contractors and give proper consideration to contractual responsibilities.